



**TOWN OF MANSFIELD
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April 9, 2003

Ms. Nancy Andersen, Manager of Rental Division
Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency
One Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108

Re: 40B Project, Fairfield Green, Mansfield, Massachusetts

Dear Ms. Andersen:

The Board of Selectmen, upon initial review of the proposed Fairfield Green 40B project, desires to express our opposition to the proposal as submitted. As the policy board of corporate Mansfield, the magnitude of the project will have a profound impact on our local infrastructure, school system, water and wastewater operations. As you may know, over the past ten years, the Town of Mansfield has been, and continues to be, one of the fastest growing communities in Southeastern Massachusetts realizing over a 35% increase.

Based upon our initial review, the project proposes to connect to public sewer. It is the Town's understanding that the State Department of Environmental Protection will not issue wastewater connection permits until the Town has completed the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan. Our sewer capacity is above the 80% threshold, requiring the above-mentioned plan to be completed by the Town. This project will certainly place a strain on our sewage treatment and disposal operations at a time when we can least afford to accommodate the magnitude of additional flow from this project. Given the location of the Fairfield Green proposal, at least one, and perhaps more, sewer lift stations will be needed to pump waste from this site a considerable distance to existing sanitary sewer mains. These lift stations will place a maintenance and repair burden that would not exist on a site utilizing a gravity system. Likewise, the Town is very concerned about our drinking water supply. The town currently has a seasonal water use deficit that forces outdoor water use restrictions and has required outdoor water use prohibitions during times of peak demand. The projected number of bedrooms proposed at 384 will result in the equivalent consumption of 128 three-bedroom homes. If the State was inclined to ignore our concerns and grant project approval, such approval must be conditional so that

no more than 45 units are constructed in a single year. This will permit a phased-in approach whereby the strain on our water system can be gradually introduced into our water system. Furthermore, our water connection policy requires that the developer replace/conserves water on a two-to-one ratio. The developer will be required to save two gallons of water for every one gallon committed to the project. In order to achieve this savings and to minimize the impact on our water system, a phased-in approach to the construction of units will be necessary.

The project will introduce a large amount of traffic onto West Street, which is already overburdened with a significant increase in traffic volume due to our population growth (as stated earlier). West Street is a narrow road, 18 to 24 feet in width, with limited sight distance, due to a hill and a curve in the location of the proposed project. The State should require the applicant to complete a traffic study and analysis, and the results should be reviewed by the Massachusetts Highway Department prior to the issuance of any site eligibility letter.

Furthermore, the local Zoning Board of Appeals recently closed a public hearing on a 42-unit apartment complex under the 40B process. Two other 40B projects are filed with your office and the Town of Mansfield. Public hearings on those projects will open at the end of April. The first is a 24-lot single-family "for sale" development including seven (7) affordable homes. The second is a proposed 72-unit rental project whereby the Town believes that the applicant may not have control of the site. Should the Zoning Board of Appeals approve all proposed projects articulated in this letter, an additional 126 units of affordable housing will be credited to our ten percent affordable housing threshold mandated by the State. Presently, based on the number of affordable housing units currently in our community, the Town only needs 231 additional affordable housing units to reach our ten percent affordable housing threshold. The Fairfield Green project, if approved, will raise the percentage of affordable units in Mansfield well above the 10 percent threshold while abutting communities are not close to the ten percent threshold requirements. Under this scenario, only 105 units of the Fairfield Green project would be necessary to reach our ten percent threshold goal. Should the project approval at the State level move forward, the Town adamantly desires to reduce the project scope and size to no more than 105 units of affordable rental housing. If at a future time, the Town falls below the threshold, then an additional phase of the Fairfield project could be permitted.

Finally, the potential impact to the school system will be enormous. The applicant must be required to prepare a complete fiscal impact analysis incorporating all aspects of anticipated municipal services to be impacted from this project. Furthermore, the Town is presently dealing with a strained budget, and an increase in demand on both the municipal and the school services will result in further cutbacks and an overall reduction in services to our residents.

While the Town of Mansfield remains committed to affordable housing initiatives, such large-scale impacts based on project size places an unusually large burden on a high growth community at a time when we can least afford such impacts.

Sincerely,

Daniel Donovan
Chairman, Board of Selectmen

Cc: John O. D'Agostino, Town Manager
Shaun Burke, Director of Planning & Development
Richard Lewis, Conservation & Environmental Planner